

A Defibrillator for Every High School

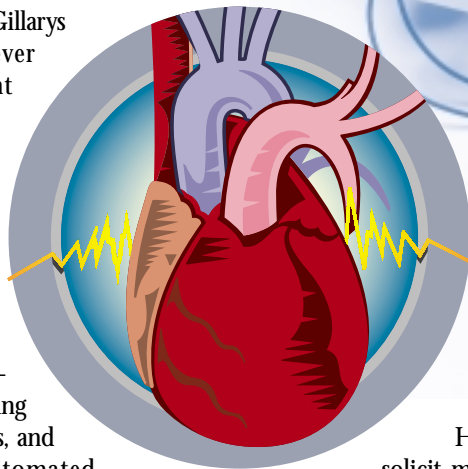
A Troy lawyer advocates the use of cardiac equipment

By *Naseem Stecker*

The sudden death of a beloved teenage daughter last April threw Troy attorney Randall Gillary, his wife Susan, and their family into a period of deep anguish and soul-searching. Despite many efforts to save 15-year-old Kimberly Anne Gillary, who suffered a cardiac arrest while playing in a water polo game in Birmingham, she never regained consciousness.

The grief-stricken Gillarys decided to do whatever they could to prevent another family from suffering the kind of pain they went through. The result, was the formation of a foundation named after Kimberly, with the purpose of advocating cardiac screening and testing of all Michigan athletes, and the placement of automated external defibrillators in all Michigan high schools. This equipment is designed for use by first responders to cardiac emergencies. Every minute without defibrillation after a cardiac arrest increases the risk of death by 10 percent.

Randall Gillary and his wife did not know that their daughter had a condition known as hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, which is an enlargement of the heart muscle. A person with this condition is more susceptible to cardiac arrest during strenuous athletic activity. Gillary said the presence of a defibrillator "would have increased Kim's chances of surviving."



His mission now is to solicit monetary support from all Michigan lawyers to place at least one defibrillator in every high school in the state by April 1, 2002. At a cost of \$3,100 per unit, approximately \$2.7 million is needed to put one defibrillator in the 860 high schools in the state. To date, the Kimberly Ann Gillary Foundation, which has been designated a nonprofit corporation, has raised \$130,000 and purchased 30 defibrillators for donation to Michigan high schools.

"As lawyers, we often get involved in the aftermath of problems, including those relating specifically to personal injury and wrongful death. One of the justifications for product liability litigation is that it encour-

ages businesses to manufacture safer products resulting in fewer injuries," Gillary said. "The problem of the lack of automated external defibrillators in Michigan's high schools is something that Michigan lawyers should be proactive in changing. Why not take some action, which will have the effect of saving lives rather than just litigating the aftermath? . . . I can assure you that if our efforts prevent even one family from losing a teenager, it will be worth it."

To make a contribution, please contact Randall Gillary at 201 West Big Beaver Road, Suite 1020, Troy, MI 48084. Telephone: (248) 528-0440. ♦

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